



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Maryland Man Pleads Guilty to Armed Sexual Assault and Armed Burglary of Four Victims He Met Through Craigslist**

WASHINGTON - Edgar D. Romero, 24, of Bladensburg, Md., pled guilty today in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to charges stemming from armed attacks on four women whom he met through their Craigslist postings, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Romero pled guilty to two counts of first degree sexual abuse while armed, one count of first degree burglary, and one count of robbery while armed. Each count involves a different female victim. The sentence provided by the plea, if accepted by the Court, is 30 years of incarceration. The defendant also is required to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

The Honorable Judge Michael L. Rankin set sentencing for December 17, 2010.

According to the evidence presented at the plea hearing and two previously held preliminary hearings, Romero contacted numerous women - including the four identified in the plea - during the period of December 12, 2008, through February 20, 2009, through Craigslist advertisements for "erotic services." He met each victim at a hotel in the District.

At each encounter with a victim, Romero at some point brandished a weapon, either a knife or a firearm, and threatened to kill her if she did not cooperate fully. He, along with accomplices, bound each victim with cords or duct tapes. Romero stole numerous items from these victims including money, cell phones, lap tops, identification cards, and credit cards.

He sexually assaulted the two victims identified in the plea and aided and abetted his accomplice's sexual assault on one of the victims. After he made a final threat to find and harm the victims if they told the police, he and the accomplices left.

In announcing today's plea, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the outstanding law enforcement efforts of an entire team of members of the Metropolitan Police Department and the FBI's Washington Field Office who worked on these investigations. He praised lead detective Wallace Carmichael of MPD's Sexual Assault Unit, as well as the dedicated Special Agents from the FBI's Washington Field Office. He also noted and thanked the significant effort made by Sexual Assault Unit detective Ingrid Harkins and Second District Detective Keith Tabron.

In addition, U.S. Attorney Machen recognized the assistance of MPD Sergeants Ronald Reid and Julius Hunter; detectives Kimberly Metivier, Nelson Morais, and Don Juan Monroe; Mobile Crime Lab officers Thomas Coughlin, Kevin Jeter, Ridley Durham, Leather Strong; Crime Scene Officers Tisha Lyons, Mary Wise, and Israel Ruiz, and fingerprint examiners Hayward Bennett, Barbara Evans, Murray Jones, and Clinton Hall.

He also commended the cooperation of prosecutors with the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office and members of the Major Crimes Homicide/Sex Section and the Fourth District Investigative Section of the Montgomery County Police Department, who provided assistance during all stages of the investigation. U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of Victim Witness Unit Advocates Tracey Hawkins, Iris Vega, and Melissa Milam, Paralegals Joyce Arthur and Tiffany Jones, and Legal Assistant Ashley Patterson, all of the U.S. Attorney's Office. He also recognized the substantial assistance by U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Investigators John Marsh and Lawrence Grasso. Finally, he recognized Assistant U.S. Attorney Sharon Marcus-Kurn who is prosecuting the case.